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KNAUF
ACUÑA

# ETERNALS™



DIRECT EDITION



BEHOLD, MORTALS, THE ETERNALS! CREATED BY COSMIC BEINGS CALLED THE CELESTIALS AND TASKED WITH SAFEGUARDING THE EARTH, THE ETERNALS ARE AN IMMORTAL GROUP OF HEROES WHOSE NEAR LIMITLESS POWER IS UNLIKE ANYTHING HUMANITY HAS EVER KNOWN!



**SERSI**



**MAKKARI**



**DREAMING CELESTIAL**



**IKARIS**



**THENA**



**DRUIG**



**JOEY (Thena's Son)**



MUCH TO THE CONSTERNATION OF SERSI, MAKKARI CONTINUES TO COMMUNE WITH THE DREAMING CELESTIAL. WITH EVERY TRIP INTO DREAMSPACE, A PART OF MAKKARI IS LOST, BUT HE MUST CONTINUE TO IDENTIFY THE ETERNALS HIDDEN AMONG HUMANS BEFORE THE HORDE ARRIVES AND DEVOURS THE EARTH.

AS IKARIS AND THENA RACE TO LOCATE ETERNALS STILL SUFFERING FROM THE AMNESIC EFFECTS OF SPRITE'S MISCHIEF, DRUIG CONTINUES TO RECRUIT THEM AT A FAR FASTER RATE. THOUGH HIS RECRUITMENT METHODS REMAIN A MYSTERY, HIS OBJECTIVE OF BECOMING PRIME ETERNAL IS CLEAR.





WHEN IKARIS AND THENA CONFRONT DRUIG AS HE ATTEMPTS TO RECRUIT THE ETERNAL KNOWN AS LEGBA, A BATTLE ENSUES IN WHICH OUR HEROES MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN LEGBA AND THE LIFE OF THENA'S SON JOEY.

THOUGH THEY ARE ABLE TO RESCUE HIM, UNBEKNOWNST TO THE ETERNALS, JOEY IS POSSESSED BY A MEMBER OF THE HORDE. WITH EACH WORD THEY MUTTER IN JOEY'S PRESENCE, ANY DEFENSE THE ETERNALS MIGHT HOPE TO MOUNT AGAINST THE HORDE'S IMPENDING ARRIVAL IS FURTHER COMPROMISED.



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WITH YOUR SUPPORT, I CAN *USURP* THE ROLE OF PRIME ETERNAL.

I WILL THEN ENGAGE EVERY ETERNAL ON THE PLANET TO GENERATE A *UNI-MIND--* ONE *MORE POWERFUL* THAN HAS EVER BEEN *IMAGINED,* MUCH LESS REALIZED.

WITH IT WE WILL *SEIZE CONTROL* OF THE DREAMING CELESTIAL, ELEVATING OUR KIND TO THE LEVEL OF TRUE *GODHOOD.*

BOLDNESS, MY FRIENDS, WILL BE REWARDED WITH THE KEYS TO THE UNIVERSE!

AND FAILURE, DRUIG?

ANSWER ME THIS, LEGBA...

...COULD IT BE ANY WORSE THAN AN ETERNITY SPENT IN A CAGE CLEANING UP AFTER *ANIMALS?*



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HELP YOURSELF, MAN. WE GOT ORGANIC PEANUT-BUTTER-AND-BANANA SANDWICHES IN THE TENT, ICE-COLD WATER, GREEN TEA...
ALL'S WE NEED IS A TOKEN DONATION TO HELP OUT THE CAUSE, MAN. THIS THING WAS PUT HERE FOR--
AXE 8

FOR *WHAT?*
FOR, UHM... WELL...

"...NEVERMIND."
THE WORLD IS FULL OF *UNELIGHTENED SHEEPLE,* STUFFING THEMSELVES WITH *FAST FOOD...*

...MELTING INTO THEIR SOFAS WHILE THE PLANET IS *RAPED,* TURNED INTO A *VAST, STINKING STENCH-HOLE* BY POLITICAL *MEAT PUPPETS* AND THE *GREEDY CORPORATE PIGS* THAT *PULL THEIR STRINGS...!*

THIS *SPLENDID BEING--* THIS *GOLDEN GOD--* WANTS US TO WAKE UP! HE WANTS US TO--
AND HOW WOULD ONE SUCH AS *YOU* KNOW WHAT *IT* WANTS?!


DID YOU SPEND TEN-THOUSAND HUMAN LIFETIMES STUDYING THIS GOD-BEING?
DID YOU DECIPHER THE COMPLEXITIES OF ITS LANGUAGE, THE VERY UTTERANCE OF WHICH WOULD TIP A MORTAL MIND INTO MADNESS?

THAT'S ENOUGH WITH THE HOSTILITY.
TIME TO GO, SEÑOR BUZZ-KILL...
YEAH, JERK! WHO THE HELL'RE YOU?

I AM AJAK!

AND YOU ARE JUST A SAD LITTLE FRAUD.
Y-YOU FASCIST! YOU DON'T KNOW ME!
OH, BUT I DO. ONE LOOK INTO YOUR EYES AND YOUR SOUL IS WRIT...
YOU CALL YOURSELF "HOWL," BUT YOUR TRUE NAME IS HOWELL. FRANKLIN HOWELL. STILL LIVING ON YOUR MOMMY AND DADDY'S TRUST FUND...
...A SECOND-RATE PROFESSOR WHOSE PAPERS ARE RIDDLED WITH PLAGIARISM; AN "ACTIVIST" WHOSE ONLY TRUE PASSION IS FOR COEDS HALF HIS AGE...
...A COWARD WHO RAPED ONE OF HIS STUDENTS, THEN DESTROYED HER REPUTATION WITH LIES BEFORE SHE COULD LEVEL A CHARGE.
OH YES, FRANKLIN HOWELL.

"I KNOW *EXACTLY* WHO YOU ARE."

ANTHEM TO SUPERNAUT, WHAT'S THE STATUS?

GOLDEN GATE PARK'S DESERTED. WE'RE ABOUT TO ENTER THE TENT NOW...

WHAT THE...

YOU THERE! *FREEZE!*

WE'RE WITH *THE ORDER.*

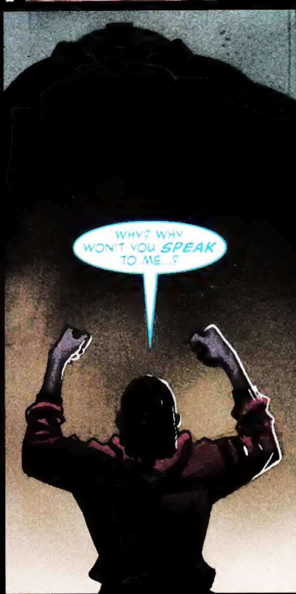
RAISE YOUR HANDS AND IDENTIFY YOURSELF.

I THINK IT BEST YOU LEAVE IN PEACE. I AM NO THREAT TO YOU.


WE'LL MAKE THAT CALL LATER. RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE COMING WITH US.
NO...
...YOU WILL LEAVE.


THE ONE WHO DESTROYED THIS PLACE IS GONE.


WE'RE TOO LATE. AREA'S CLEAR.
WHOEVER TRASHED THE PLACE IS LONG GONE...
LET'S HEAD OUT. CHECK THE REST OF THE PARK...


WHY? WHY WON'T YOU SPEAK TO ME...?


HAVE I NOT PROVEN MY FEALTY? I HAVE ALWAYS SERVED YOUR KIND. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE HIM...

"...WHY MAKKARI?"

DREAMSPACE: MAKKARI AND THE DREAMING CELESTIAL.

THE (BIRTH/CREATION) OF A CELESTIAL.

IT'S SO...






PLANET 654.3454.7928.

*WHAT ARE YOU SHOWING ME?*

EVERYTHING, MAKKARI...

EVERYTHING.

PLANETS POPULATED BY A VIABLE BASE SPECIES POSSESSING THE REQUISITE NEUROLOGICAL POTENTIAL ARE CHOSEN FOR CULTIVATION.

WE (CHANGE/ENHANCE/EVOLVE) ONE-HUNDRED RANDOM SPECIMENS INTO *(CLASSIFICATION: ETERNAL).*






S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER.

I'M NOT HAPPY, SERSI. DO I LOOK HAPPY?

TECHNICALLY, WE *CAN'T* REGISTER. WE'RE NOT U.S. CITIZENS.

SO NOW YOU'RE SAYING YOU PEOPLE ARE *ILLEGAL ALIENS?*

I PREFER THE TERM "UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS."

THAT'S CUTE. VERY CUTE..

...BUT WHEN ONE OF YOUR "UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS" GOES BERSERK IN A PUBLIC PARK, THEN TEMPORARILY *MIND-BAKES* MY FIRST RESPONDERS, THAT MAKES ME VERY...

NOT HAPPY?

DON'T PUSH ME, SERSI.

WE'RE SORRY ABOUT AJAK, TONY.

IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN.

I WANT TO BELIEVE YOU--I *DO* BELIEVE YOU, BUT...

...SERS, I'M CORNERED HERE. I MEAN, I KNOW THE ETERNALS DESERVE A CERTAIN DEGREE OF AUTONOMY BUT, WELL...

...YOUR FREAKING *DEITY'S* PARKED LESS THAN TEN YARDS FROM THE MONKEY-BARS!

TONY, PLEASE. MY KIND HAS BEEN DEALING WITH THESE ENTITIES FOR EONS. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

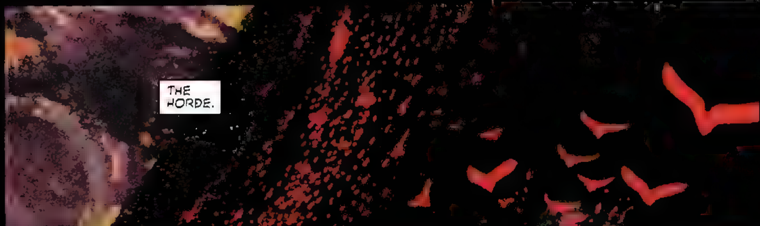
THEN WHAT DO YOU SAY TO A FORMAL ALLIANCE? YOU HELP US, WE HELP YOU, YADDA YADDA YADDA...

YOU KNOW, SHOW EVERYONE THAT YOUR PEOPLE ARE OPEN TO DIPLOMACY.

NO OFFENSE, BUT THE *BEST* THING YOU CAN DO TO HELP US...

...IS TO LEAVE US ALONE.

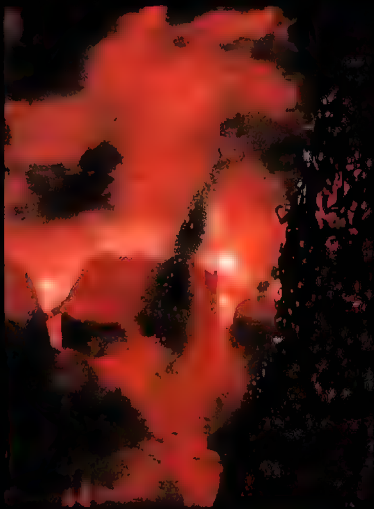

AFTER NINETEEN COSMIC CYCLES, THE PLANET IS READY FOR (REAPING/TERMINATION/QUIETUS) AND THE AGGREGATE ENERGY FROM THE BASE SPECIES IS (GATHERED/HARVESTED/CHANNELED) TO THE FULCRUM.
THERE IS BUT ONE ENTITY IN THE UNIVERSE THAT CAN (GATHER/HARVEST/CHANNEL) THE COLLECTIVE LIFE-FORCE WITHOUT COMPLETE SELF-ANNIHILATION.


THE HORDE.


IF THE PLANET'S AGGREGATE ENERGY SIGNATURE IS CONSISTENT WITH *(CLASSIFICATION: ETERNAL)*, THE LIFE-FORCE IS TRANSFERRED TO THE CELESTIALS.

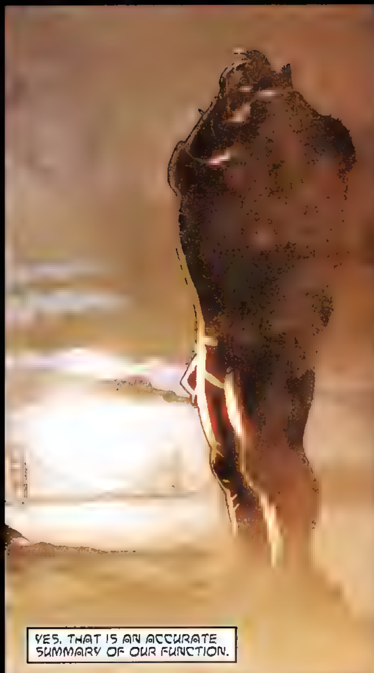

IF THE PLANET'S AGGREGATE ENERGY SIGNATURE IS CONSISTENT WITH *(CLASSIFICATION: DEVIANT)*, THE LIFE-FORCE IS TRANSFERRED TO THE HORDE.


AS THE CELESTIALS ARE THE INSTRUMENTS OF THE (PLANTING/CREATION/TEEMING), THE HORDE IS THE INSTRUMENT OF (REAPING/TERMINATION/QUIETUS).




SO THAT'S IT?
UNKNOWN QUERY: "THAT'S IT?"


YOU GUYS JUST CRUISE AROUND THE UNIVERSE, SETTING UP SENTIENT LIFE ON PLANETS LIKE... LIKE...
...PIECES ON A BOARD GAME?
THEN WHAT? YOU TAKE OFF FOR A WHILE, SEE HOW THINGS SHAKE OUT AND THE WINNER TAKES ALL?


YES. THAT IS AN ACCURATE SUMMARY OF OUR FUNCTION.









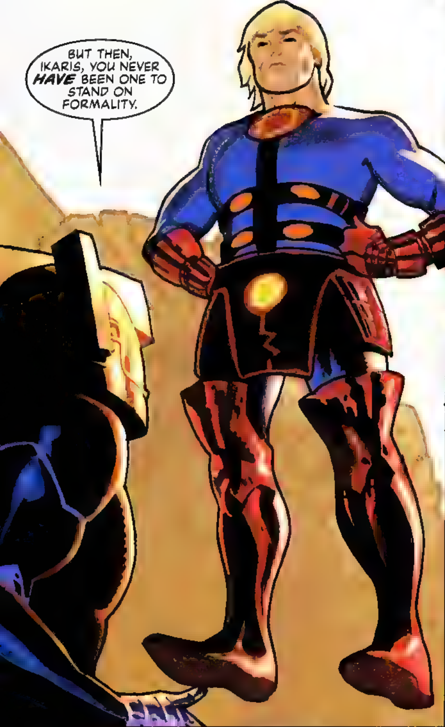



ANTARCTICA, OLYMPIA, DOMINION OF THE ETERNALS, AJAK'S QUARTERS.

***AJAK!***

***HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?!***

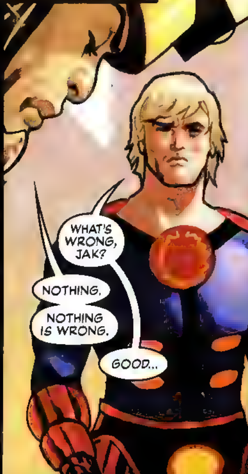
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF KNOCKING?

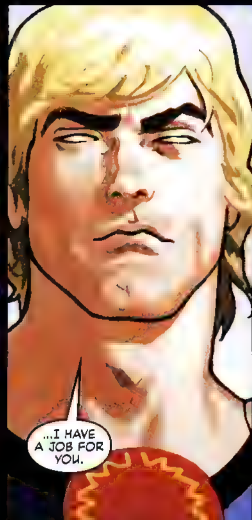



DAMN IT, AJAK! WE'RE ON THIN ICE AS IT IS, ESPECIALLY WITH THE UNITED STATES!
THE LAST THING WE NEED IS YOU THROWING SOME KIND OF **RAMPAGE--**
**WHAT DO YOU EXPECT ME TO DO?!**
THOSE...**PRIMATES** HAD **NO RESPECT!** YOU SHOULD HAVE **SEEN** THE THINGS THEY WERE PEDDLING THAT BORE THE CELESTIAL'S IMAGE!




IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVEN'T SEEN THIS BEFORE.
WHEN HUMANS DON'T UNDERSTAND SOMETHING, IT EITHER BECOMES AN OBJECT TO WORSHIP--
--OR IT GETS DESTROYED. I KNOW.



I'LL DO WHAT I CAN ABOUT OUR LITTLE PROBLEM IN GOLDEN GATE PARK, BUT...

I KNOW, I KNOW. WHERE DOES A NINE-HUNDRED POUND GORILLA SIT?

ANYWHERE HE WANTS TO.

UH-HUH.

WOULD YOU MIND IF I ASKED YOU A PERSONAL QUESTION?

DEPENDS ON WHAT IT IS.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF HUMAN CONDITIONS THAT ARE COMPLETELY ALIEN TO ME AND MY KIND AND, WELL...

WHAT?

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF SOMEONE YOU'RE CLOSE TO IS... SUFFERING FROM AN ADDICTION?

ARE YOU ASKING ME BECAUSE I'M A HUMAN, OR BECAUSE I'M A DRUNK?

I-I'M SORRY, I--

IT'S OKAY, I'M JUST TEASING.

MY EXPERIENCE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THAT IF YOU'RE *WONDERING* IF SOMEONE'S AN ADDICT, CHANCES ARE...

...YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.







BECAUSE I TRUST YOU. AND WE NEED TO FIND OUT HOW DRUIG IS LOCATING THE SLEEPING ETERNALS.

SOUNDS LIKE BUSY WORK.

***BUSY WORK...?***

I'M ASKING YOU TO INFILTRATE VOROZHEIKA, ASSUME COVER, AND BURROW YOUR WAY INTO THE BELLY OF THE BEAST WITHOUT BEING DETECTED.

I GUESS THAT ***MIGHT*** BE A CHALLENGE.

YOU GUESS.

BUT BE STRAIGHT WITH ME, IKARIS...

...THIS IS REALLY ABOUT KEEPING ME OUT OF TROUBLE, ISN'T IT?

SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO GO TO ***EXTREME*** MEASURES.


EVERY COMPONENT IN THE PHYSICAL UNIVERSE IS A (MODEL/EXAMPLE/ FUNCTION) OF BALANCE.
FROM THE SMALL...
..TO THE LARGE..
..TO THE IMMENSE.

PUSHED AND PULLED BY OPPOSING FORCES, SOMETIMES VIOLENTLY, BUT ALWAYS PERFECTLY BALANCED...

EVERY (PARTICLE/BEING/ CONCEPT/ACTION) EXISTS IN THIS STATE OF SUBLIME EQUILIBRIUM...

...TO SERVE THE FULCRUM.

MAKKARI AND SERSI'S LOFT, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

GAHH!

"I THINK THE CONTACT IS KILLING HIM."
ANTARCTICA.
WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?
EACH TIME MAKKARI COMES OUT OF ONE OF HIS... I GUESS YOU'D CALL THEM SESSIONS OR...
...WHATEVER. AT FIRST, HE WAS JUST DISTRACTED, A LITTLE OUT OF IT. BUT NOW...
MONITOR AND DISSEMINATE...
HIS HEALTH IS AFFECTED. HIS HEARTBEAT SLOWS TO, WELL...NOTHING. FOR DAYS ON END, HE DOESN'T DRAW A SINGLE BREATH.
THINGS LIKE THAT AREN'T A PROBLEM FOR US--
--IT'S MORE THAN THAT!
MAKKARI. ETERNAL- CLASS HUMANOID IS IN CONTACT WITH CELESTIAL-CLASS UNIT...
HE...HIS LIFE FORCE. HIS ESSENCE. IT'S FADING AWAY, THENA. I CAN FEEL IT.
DON'T ASK ME HOW, BUT I KNOW IF HE KEEPS THIS UP, HE WILL CEASE TO EXIST.
YOU MUST URGE IKARIS TO MAKE HIM STOP!
CONTACT WITH CELESTIAL-CLASS UNIT IS COMPROMISED BY INCOMPATIBLE BASE SPECIES NEUROLOGY...
SERSI, I UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE WORRIED.
BUT MAKKARI'S BOND WITH THE DREAMING CELESTIAL IS CRITICAL. IT'S THE ONLY MEANS WE HAVE TO LOCATE THE REST OF THE ETERNALS--
I KNOW THAT, BUT...
...HE'S ALL I HAVE.
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.
MONITOR AND DISSEMINATE...


FORGET IT, THENA.


SERSI IS CONVINCED THAT MAKKARI'S BOND WITH THE DREAMING CELESTIAL IS DESTROYING HIM--

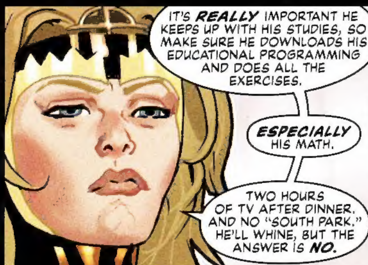

WE **CAN'T** BE DESTROYED. SEE, THENA, THAT'S WHY... **WE'RE** CALLED... **ETERNALS.**
**DON'T PATRONIZE ME!** YOU KNOW **PERFECTLY WELL** WHAT I'M SAYING.
PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION IS JUST **ONE** FORM OF DEATH.


MAKKARI'S BOND WITH THE DREAMING CELESTIAL IS OUR ONLY TACTICAL ADVANTAGE. WE NEED HIM NOW MORE THAN EVER.
WHAT ABOUT AJAK? HE'S BEEN COMMUNICATING WITH THE CELESTIALS FOR **EONS.**
WELL, APPARENTLY, THIS ONE ISN'T INTERESTED IN TALKING TO HIM.
WHY NOT?
**I** DON'T KNOW. MAYBE IT'S **DEFECTIVE.** MAYBE IT'S IN A "BAD MOOD." MAYBE AJAK STOLE ITS PROM DATE...


ALL I **DO** KNOW IS THAT IF IT WASN'T FOR THE BOND IT HAS WITH **MAKKARI,** WE'D HAVE NEVER LOCATED PHASTOS!
HE LOCATED PHASTOS?! WHEN?
I JUST CONFIRMED THE DETAILS FIVE MINUTES AGO.

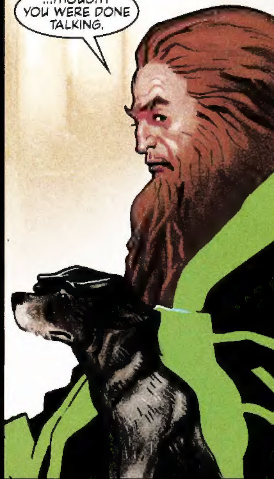

HE'S TAKEN THE NAME **PHILLIP STOSS.**
HE'S EMPLOYED AS AN AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEER FOR ZIFF-ENGEL MOTORWERKS IN ZUFFENHAUSEN, GERMANY.
WHEN DO WE LEAVE?


"IMMEDIATELY."
ANTARCTICA, OLYMPIA, ZURAS'S GRAND HALL.
FATHER, I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO LOOK AFTER JOEY WHILE WE'RE GONE.
WHO?
JOEY, DAD. YOUR GRANDSON.
OH. YES. OF COURSE...


IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT HE KEEPS UP WITH HIS STUDIES, SO MAKE SURE HE DOWNLOADS HIS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND DOES ALL THE EXERCISES.
ESPECIALLY HIS MATH.
TWO HOURS OF TV AFTER DINNER. AND NO "SOUTH PARK." HE'LL WHINE, BUT THE ANSWER IS NO.


MAKE SURE HE'S IN BED BY EIGHT-THIRTY. HE CAN READ UNTIL NINE, BUT THEN LIGHTS OUT, UNDERSTAND?


DAD...?
MAYBE I SHOULD CHANGE HIS DIET.
WHAT?!
SOCRATES, HERE. I THINK HE MAY NEED MORE FAT IN HIS DIET. HIS COAT LOOKS DULL.
DID YOU HEAR A SINGLE WORD I JUST SAID?
YES. OF COURSE. I JUST...


...THOUGHT YOU WERE DONE TALKING.

MAYBE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, BUT WE ARE HEADED FOR AN *INSURRECTION*--AN INSURRECTION THAT DRUIG MAY VERY WELL WIN!

I WAS JUST--

OKAY, YOU'RE *BURNED OUT.* I *GET* IT! YOU'RE OVER A HUNDRED-AND-FIFTY-THOUSAND YEARS OLD. JUST TRY TO KEEP IN MIND THAT *SOME OF US* STILL GIVE A DAMN!




VOROZHEIKA, DRUIG AND LEGBA.

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE IT'S POSSIBLE TO *HIJACK* A CELESTIAL?

NOT *ANY* CELESTIAL, BUT THIS ONE...?

YES.

I BELIEVE IT'S BEEN COMPROMISED, PERHAPS DEACTIVATED AND CAST OUT BY THE OTHERS...

...LIKE US.


















***ONLY HALF THE ANCIENT TRUTH HAS BEEN REVEALED, TRUE BELIEVERS!*** TO READ THE ***FULL STORY OF THE DREAMING CELESTIAL,*** DON'T DARE MISS THE NEXT ***SOUL-SHATTERING ISSUE:***

# APOSTATE BETRAYED!

# ARCHANGEL & ROSIE

CARPE DIEM,
QUAM MINIMUM CREDULA POSTERO

